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DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

THE MATRILINEATE AGAIN

IN a recent memoir of the association which publishes this journal, Mr. E. Sidney Hartland has reopened affirmatively the question of the priority of matrilineal kinship. He reviews, in a manner most amiable and polite to those who have expressed themselves negatively, the evidence from North America and Australia, the two greatest areas of exogamy and totemism; and pleads "for a reconsideration, on the part especially of North American anthropologists, of the North American facts."

The essential facts, and the essential considerations which have led the majority of ethnologists in the North American field to the interpretation that the view of the priority of matrilineal reckoning is without foundation in their field, are contained in the basic paper on "The Social Organization of American Tribes" published in this journal by Dr. John R. Swanton a dozen years ago. Brief as is its compass, it seems that there is little of intrinsic moment bearing on the issue, either in the way of evidence or the use of evidence, that is not contained or implied in Dr. Swanton's paper. It should have essentially disposed of the matter for a generation at least. But now that a scholar of the learning, acumen, and restraint of Mr. Hartland has reentered the deserted arena with a challenge, it is only fair to conclude that he may represent also the views of others. I shall therefore attempt to restate and amplify Dr. Swanton's interpretation with a directness which his characteristic modesty would probably forbid him.

Excluding Mexico, upon which the evidence remains to be systematized by a Mexican specialist, native North America contains three areas in which definite exogamy with definitely unilateral descent prevailed. The first and largest of these comprises the territory east of the hundredth meridian and south of the fiftieth parallel, or a little beyond. The exact boundaries of the area of course are not straight lines. The western limit, for instance, protrudes farther on the north than in the south. For most of the tribes on the immediate Atlantic coast from the Carolinas to New England, the evidence is defective. So far as it goes, however, it indicates them to have been exogamic and unilaterally reckoning.

The second area comprises the Southwest, that is, the tribes of New Mexico and Arizona; also, according to recent information secured by Mr. E. W. Gifford, which I may cite because it is at this moment in press, the Indians of the greater part of the southern half of the adjacent state of California.

The third area consists of what it is customary for ethnologists to call the Northwest Coast or the North Pacific Coast of America, from the Tlingit in southern Alaska to the Kwakiutl in southern British Columbia, with an adhering fringe of tribes in the hinterland.

Now, five bodies of facts emerge.

1. Outside of the three regions mentioned, there occur no specifically exogamic groups, and descent is either bilateral, that is, indeterminate, or attached only to inheritance of property and station and not to inheritance of an affiliation determinative or regulative as regards marriage. There may remain a few tribes in the vast territories excluded from the three exogamic areas, which on fuller knowledge may prove to belong with the exogamic peoples in the three areas. They are certainly not many, since the North American tribes have been examined so extensively that the result is almost that of a systematic inquiry, and the subject of marriage and descent has so long been in the forefront of attention that the probability of revolutionizing data having been overlooked is exceedingly small. Practically, therefore, the existence of a great irregular but continuous territory, covering about half of the continent, and inhabited wholly by non-exogamic peoples, must be admitted.

2. Within each of the three exogamic areas, substantially every tribe—so far as present knowledge goes, absolutely every tribe—adhered to a scheme of social groupings that were concerned with marriage and were inherited in one line of descent only.

3. In each of these three exogamic areas, both matrilineal and patrilineal descent was found among different tribes. In the East, the Muskhogeans and Iroquoians formed the bulk of a compact body of matrilineal nations, partly surrounded by a continuous belt of patrilineal tribes, mainly Algonkian and Siouan. A second, smaller, and detached matrilineal group consisted of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Crow on the western edge of the area. In the Southwest, the Pueblos and Athabascans were matrilineal, the Piman, Yuman, and Californian tribes patrilineal. The Northwest was matrilineal except for the Kwakiutl. The institutions of the Kwakiutl are certainly abnormal; but if the primacy of their father-right be questioned, it should be

remembered that all the tribes to their south unquestionably transmitted family crests, rank and title, badges of honor, and wealth, from father to son, even though lacking intrinsically exogamic divisions.

4. In each area the most advanced tribes, those which, so far as their history is known or may without unreasonable speculation be inferred, have produced a type of civilization, are matrilineal. Those less advanced, which have absorbed or simplified their civilization rather than created or added to it, are patrilineal. Signs of such advancement are agriculture; town life; an intricate economic system; a development of industrial processes or the arts, as statistically determinable by the number of kinds of manufactures; an elaborated religion with numerous and interrelated ceremonies; the ability to develop coherent political institutions. It is true that backward tribes are sometimes matrilineal. The matrilineal hinterland Athabascans of the Northwest certainly possessed a less intensified civilization than the semi-patrilineal Kwakiutl. It might also be questioned whether the Navajo and Apache should be reckoned as more advanced than the Pima and Yuma. But in each case the quickening hearth of a civilization, the center from which it obviously radiated, the focus at which it reaches its brilliance, is among matrilineal peoples; the penumbra in which the civilization fades out, or indeterminately merges into another, is prevailingly patrilineal. The Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian form, or at any rate include, such a focus for the whole Northwest, the Pueblos for the Southwest, in the opinion of every student who has concerned himself with such distinctions. In the East, the Iroquois are ranked above the Algonkians, on the basis of their general culture, and the Muskhogean above the Siouan tribes. If any one holds a contrary opinion, he has not made himself heard. Even the subsidiary and isolated matrilinear canton on the edge of the great Eastern area confirms the rule. It comprises two of three "village Indian" tribes in the nomadic hunting area of the Plains, plus only an established offshoot, the Crow, of one of them; while the third of the town-dwelling, agricultural tribes, the Arikara, are a historically recent branch from the half nomadic Pawnee.

5. By the same scale, the non-exogamic area includes not a single tribe of distinctly advanced or complex culture, no hearth or focus of a type of civilization, but is inhabited over its several millions of square miles wholly by peoples universally characterized as backward in comparison with the bulk of those in the exogamic areas. The Eskimo indeed excel in mechanical inventions; but the remainder of their civilization is certainly of the meagerest; and the same is always stated of the

tribes of the interior of northern Canada, of the intermountain Plateau and Great Basin, of California, and of Texas. Where something of a local civilization has sprung up in these regions, it is invariably a reduced sub-type of a greater civilization centered in an exogamic area; as the culture of the non-exogamic Yurok of northwestern California is clearly only built upon a three or four times filtered leakage from the general Northwest coast culture whose quality is intensest among the Haida.

If these five masses of facts mean anything, they mean this:

So far as the phenomena of what it is customary to call social organization or social institutions in native North America relate to other phenomena, they show an overwhelming connection between lack of exogamy and of unilateral descent on the one hand and the most backward state of civilization on the other; between exogamy and unilateral descent and more intricate and richer civilization. Within the confines of exogamy, patrilineal reckoning prevails among the less advanced nations, and every important acme of civilization is situated among matrilineal peoples. The inference seems inevitable, that so far as North America is concerned, the original or early type of culture possessed no definite exogamic institutions and counted descent bilaterally or only in connection with property and rank. In those regions in which civilization progressed, exogamy grew up, but first with patrilineal descent; where it culminated, it became matrilineal. What is more, this process was independently repeated—certainly in the Northwest as compared with the other areas, possibly in the Southwest and East, not impossibly twice within the East. There is no need of talking in this connection of what are often called "laws": but a positive drift, for a long period and in a positive direction, is manifest.

There is not the least intent to maintain that this indicated development is a sequence of stages having abstract validity, or that it was being passed through by each and every American nation. It must be admitted that we can not positively affirm that any given tribe that is now matrilineal was patrilineal twenty generations ago. The evidence does not yet run so specific. It is also extremely likely that some matrilineal tribes have been matrilineal ever since they followed exogamic rules, without ever passing through a patrilineal condition, and that this or that backward patrilineal people took their exogamy ready-made from a matrilineal group but altered its reckoning to conform with the mode of inheritance prevalent among them. In fact I doubt whether either matrilinear or patrilinear descent cuts very deeply into the life of any American nation. I am inclined to think that it rests compara-

tively lightly on the genuinely intrinsic anatomy of their society, and that many of them could change and some perhaps have changed from one reckoning to the other without a very serious disturbance of their institutions. Even exogamy seems to me something that they probably take on or put off rather easily; as indeed I hold the whole scheme of clanship, with Dr. Swanton and others, to be a more formal and superficial thing by far than kinship, from the native American point of view itself. I should be ready therefore to allow of a multitude of individual exceptions, especially as regards literal "priority" or "sequence." But just as I believe that next to nothing can be proved as to the actuality of the undifferentiation-patrilineate-matrilineate development *in any given case*, so I believe that Mr. Hartland, in the present state of knowledge, can prove next to nothing as to the actuality or even probability of any particular exceptions. All that we know much about, or can infer as yet, is that the general broad current of development, and on the whole of sequence, indicates strongly that patrilineal institutions underlie matrilineal institutions in North America, and non-exogamic institutions underlie both.

There are only two other interpretations for this body of coherent facts. One is that the advanced tribes, the producers and moulders of civilization, and therefore of institutions, have regularly been conservative of their primitive state as regards the institutions of marriage and descent alone, and thus have maintained an original maternal exogamy, which the backward and ruder tribes once also shared, but in process of time either altered to its patrilineal form or lost altogether. This explanation is extremely unlikely, in the arbitrariness of its supposition that a civilization, or rather several of them repeatedly, should progress along all lines but one, and that this side of life should proceed to achieve new phases only among peoples whose culture in all other respects developed slowly or not at all.

The remaining interpretation is that the whole history of American civilizations since an early period has been one of degeneration, the active and preponderating nations alone supporting their original laws of descent with vigor and success. No one would seriously maintain such a view, I think; but if so, and it were establishable, the victory for the priority of matrilineal institutions would be sterile, since the priority would be one of bare time only, and as regards degree of development patrilineal and bilateral reckoning would remain accompaniments of stunting and lack of resource.

In fine, the correlation between matrilineal institutions and pro-

gressive, advanced, and productive types of civilization in North America is too complete, positively as well as reversely, to allow of any conclusion but that in some manner, and for whatever causes, they are definitely connected.

This, then, is what a reconsideration of the facts leads to—a reconsideration guided by the desire to express from the mass of phenomena their vital sap. What is more important, the method by which this interpretation is reached is one of determining the relations of as many facts as possible. Like phenomena are associated; they are set in a relation of geographical space—the dimension which is to the ethnologist not indeed the substitute for time but the first step toward the attainment of that element; and the social phases of civilizations are considered with reference to their other phases. Now this may not be very deep nor far-reaching science, but it is of the very essence of the method of science in its fundamentals, in that it is orderly, impartial, definite in results, based throughout on phenomena, and coherent.

As opposed to this plan, it is fair to inquire on what method Mr. Hartland's denial of these conclusions rests. He makes no serious use of the primary factor of geography. He attempts even less to correlate social institutions of peoples with other aspects of their civilizations or with these civilizations viewed as such. His plan is one of dissociating phenomena as they actually occur, readily selecting those that he can weave into a fabric and contesting the face value of the remainder. All the groupings of facts here presented, except for a few that have been accumulated since the appearance of his paper, were offered by Dr. Swanton, if not formally then suggestively. That Mr. Hartland completely passes over these striking and pregnant associations of phenomena, indicates that the relations of things as they exist have little meaning to him, at least in the field of ethnology. Since no one can find permanent satisfaction in handling a large body of utterly detached and unassociated phenomena, it is evident that he must be putting them into relation by some other process than that of trying to find the relations as they occur naturally. His interest is in the relation which the phenomena bear, or can be made to bear, to a formula: the temporal and developmental priority of matrilineal over patrilineal institutions.

On the other hand, such a conviction as Dr. Swanton outlined and as is here restated is a formulation rather than a formula. But, however designated, it is certainly the *outcome* of a series of orderings of phenomena; while Mr. Hartland, like his predecessors Bachofen, McLennan, and Morgan, *begins* with a formula and attempts to adjust phenomena

to it or interpret them in conformity with it. Dr. Swanton's procedure is thus inductive and objective; his opponents', subjective and deductive.

The latter method, unless restricted rigidly to tentative trial, inevitably involves special pleading. And I believe it can not be seriously denied that the bulk of Mr. Hartland's argument is special pleading. Every possible contrary instance is examined, harried by cross-examination, confronted by contradictory witnesses, its credibility or inherent probability doubted on special or general grounds. Carver is pitted against Radin, Owen against Michelson. The patrilineal Osage forbid marriage also within the mother's clan—a prohibition "only comprehensible as a relic of matrilineal reckoning"; but when Dr. Swanton mentions the exactly corresponding case of the matrilineal Zuñi not marrying into the father's clan, the case is too lacking in significance to refute or mention. The Sia are so reduced in souls and number of their clans that they must perforce violate their laws of exogamy. California, where most of the tribes without exogamic divisions

are found, is preëminently a land "where fragments of forgotten peoples dwelt." . . . It is not surprising that they display wide divergences from the organization common to the rest of the continent. It is just the situation in which the removal of old landmarks might be anticipated, ancient rules would be broken and distinctions lost.

In other words, because the Sia, after more than three centuries of resistance to Spanish and American contact, have shrunk in population to a point where they no longer can maintain their institutions as they would like, the densely massed Californians, comprising an eighth, possibly a fifth, of the inhabitants of the entire continent exclusive of Mexico, living without legend or trace of migrations in historical time, ignorant until recently even of the existence of the Caucasian, an unwarlike people troubled by no more than border quarrels and petty feud revenges, and perhaps the least subject of any American group to serious famine—these Californians, whose avowed rudeness of culture should make them matrilineal when actually they are patrilineal or non-exogamic, are according to Mr. Hartland's reckoning not "left out of account" by him but are "taken into consideration"—by the application to them of a poetic phrase about forgotten fragments.

The final argument follows naturally. Bloody wars, perpetuated feuds; tribes wiped out, banished, amalgamated, or incorporated; the disturbing effect of horses and firearms, the influence of missionaries and traders, government intervention—all these things have been specially characteristic of American aboriginal history since the Discovery, according to Mr. Hartland.

It does not surprise me therefore to read of tribes among which few or no remnants of totemic culture, exogamy, mother-right, or the clan system exist. Nor, in these circumstances, can I draw the inference that they never did exist, as they existed among the more settled peoples of the east and south.

This is very much as if one were to proclaim a natural law, say of gravitation, and when this proved to hold in only a fraction of known instances, to invoke the will of God, or to point blandly with a sweep of the hand to the circumstance that there existed also such a force as electricity in the world, which without exaggeration could be considered potential; and to conclude that the asserted law must be a correct formulation because these extraneous factors might account for the numerous exceptions to it.

Incidentally Mr. Hartland overlooks that his bloodsheds, wanderings, absorptions, and European pressure have been by far the most marked in the matrilineal and exogamic regions of the east and south.

I submit that his method of argument is not that of an unbiased judge endeavoring to sift the most probable conclusion out of a complex mass of testimony, but that of the attorney seeking judgment in favor of a client.

The procedure of those following the method initiated by Dr. Swanton is to integrate the evidence so far as it may be integrated without forcing, and to accept the results that eventuate—those that seem certain, unhesitatingly; those that attain probability, with reserve, but as at least a temporary gain in understanding. The procedure of those who support matrilineal priority in America must be, I think, and that of Mr. Hartland is, to dislocate and disorganize the evidence, to pull it into unconnected bits, so that those fragments which corroborate the preformed opinion may be accepted without further examination, and the contrary ones assailed, besmirched, doubted, and worried. No one may adjudge himself more impartial than his opponent. But I believe that Mr. Hartland himself will not sincerely deny that Dr. Swanton interprets by associating phenomena as they are given in nature or history, whereas he associates only after dissociating them, thus operating more artificially.

Mr. Hartland's challenge to Dr. Swanton to produce an instance of patrilineal institutions changing to matrilineal can therefore be met best not by pointing to this disputed tribe or that half-known people, or by minute dissection of what so-and-so has alleged about either; but by reminding him that the evidence as a whole indicates the very powerful probability that nearly every nation in North America has reached the

matrilineal condition from the patrilineal, the unilateral reckoning from the bilateral, exogamy from a previous non-exogamic state; or at least that the apparent drift, so far back as our mental eyes can at present follow it, has been predominantly in this direction. When he has seriously impaired the inherent integrating basis of this broad and insistent inference, it will be time for his challenge to be renewed.

I should be very sorry if this reply to Mr. Hartland's review should be construed as a nationalistic endeavor, or even a nationalistically colored response, in the international field of science and scientific history. There are American anthropologists that agree with him, and British colleagues who dissent. Dr. Rivers has recently pronounced in favor of several of the contentions here advanced. It is the American Morgan who, while not the originator of the view championed by Mr. Hartland, has been perhaps its most influential propagator. That Mr. Hartland has seen fit to contribute his essay to an American organ can only be received as a compliment by Americans; as his unfailing courtesy of presentation must be genuinely appreciated by everyone. If the present reply seem harsh by contrast, as I fear it may, I can only trust that any excess of this quality may be construed as due to the ardor of a conviction: the conviction that, however slight and remote the issue itself be thought, it involves two deeply opposed methods, whose effects in rendering to the science of man understanding and an influence on the lives of men must be profoundly different.

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**"PARALLEL BETWEEN THE NORTHWEST COAST AND IROQUOIAN CLANS
AND PHRATRIES"**

IN a short paper which appeared recently in the *Anthropologist* (vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 403-405) under the above title Mr. Barbeau puts forth the suggestion that "the various phratic and moiety systems, appearing sporadically in many parts of North America, may have had a common remote origin or a single center of diffusion" (p. 405). To be sure, this statement is not made in the form of a dogmatic pronouncement, being merely based upon a "feeling" that such may have been the case.

While there can be no objection to attempts being made to find such a common origin, objections certainly must be raised against the methods by which these attempts are being made and especially against the erroneous manner of arriving at conclusions which are totally contradicted by the comparable data in question. As a matter of fact, an